

LXXVI. *A Letter from Mr. Rich. Brooke, Surgeon, to James Parsons, M. D. Secretary to the Royal Society for foreign Correspondence, concerning Inoculation.*

S I R,

Read May 14,
1752.

AS there are very few, who escape having the small-pox sooner or later in life, and as very terrible consequences too often attend the being seized with it in the natural way, it is no wonder, that most people, who have not yet had it, live in continual apprehensions and fear thereof; or that the great and evident advantages of inoculating young persons should have so universally recommended, and so firmly establish'd, that practice, which probably will never be laid aside, till some easier and equally certain method be discover'd.

Though such a discovery may, at first, seem a thing rather to be wish'd than hoped for, yet I flatter myself, that an accident, which happen'd some years ago in my practice, and the experiments, which I have since made in consequence of the hint thereby given me, may, in some measure, contribute, if not lead directly to it.

In the year 1747, I inoculated a young gentleman in Maryland, then about twenty years of age. I made a slight incision, about an inch long, on the belly of the *biceps* muscle. In that I laid the lint impregnated with variolous matter, cover'd with a digestive pledgit; then bound them on with a roller.

When

When I went afterwards to look at his arm (the roller being too slack) I found the pledgit and lint were moved to the opposite side from the wound : the incision itself was but a little discolour'd, but the part, whereon the lint lay, after its removal, was inflamed, and full of red pimples. I was afraid, that the gentleman would not be affected with the disorder ; but we were not more successful than I expected ; for he had the fever, eruptions, &c. at the usual times.

As he had but thirty odd pustules in all, he went thro' the different stages of the disorder without the least threatening symptom.

This induced me to try to communicate the disorder, without making any incision ; that is, by applying the infected lint to the arm, and confining it with an adhesive plaister. The few patients, whom I tried this method on, were children, and always with success. The absorbent vessels, I believe, in young subjects especially, will always take in a sufficient quantity of the matter to contaminate the whole mass of the circulating fluids ; and tho' the density of the pores, or scaly inspissations of the *materia perspirabilis*, in adults, may, in some measure, prevent the disorder from being communicated by contact ; yet friction, as you, sir, very justly observed to me, when I mention'd it to you, will easily remove that obstacle ; for by this means we may make the cuticle as thin as we please, and the warmth induced by friction will dilate the mouths of the absorbent vessels, and draw a moderate flux of juices to the part,

so that they may take in a sufficient quantity of variolous matter to bring on the disorder. I am, Sir,

May 2, 1752. Your most obedient humble servant,

R. Brooke.

* Since the above account was communicated to the Royal Society by Mr. Brooke, the experiment has been tried upon four children by Dr. Conyers at the Foundling-Hospital, but was followed neither by the variolous fever or eruption in any one of the instances.

LXXVII. *A Sequel of the Case of the Right Honourable Horace Walpole, Esq; relating to the Stone, since his first Account in April 1750* *.

Read May 28, 1752. **A**FTER having found myself for two years together perfectly well, and free from all symptoms of my former disorder, having taken for some time no more than one half of the quantity of soap and lime-water that I had before used; in November 1750, I came out of the country in my coach in the usual travelling pace, without the least inconvenience. But having ventur'd sometimes to go in a coach, after I came to town, upon the stones, I began at times to feel the symptoms of the same disorder, which upon any motion, besides that of going in a chair, even in walking to any degree, increased upon me; and driving only in my chariot thro' the two parks to Kensington, without going upon the stones, I found myself greatly affected, by making frequently and involuntarily water, and sometimes bloody, accompanied with sudden

* See above, p. 43.